

Leadership in Construction: Leadership Styles Practiced in Construction Project – A Review

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ABSTRACT

With the increasing importance of leadership in project-based organizations, innovative leader is essential for the sustainable development of construction projects. Leadership has been identified as one of the factors that contribute to construction organisation success. Effective leadership is essential in any company to achieve organizational goals and promote individual professional achievement. Leadership is important in all fields of human endeavour. The leadership role is critical for the smooth running of an organization and without strong leadership the organization may lose its direction, in particular when trying to achieve its target. Leadership has a direct impact on effective employee engagement. The aim of this paper is to explore the leadership style practiced in construction projects. Leadership is not “one size fits all” concept, and styles or approaches vary significantly among the successful leaders. Leadership styles should be selected and adapted to fit organizations, situations, groups, and individuals. In construction different styles of leadership are needed in different situations. These styles affect everyone from senior management to the newest intern. Different leadership styles may affect organizational effectiveness or performance. The success of any organization relies on the leadership styles practiced by the leaders. This review has found that leadership styles such as Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Full Range Leadership, Servant Leadership, Contextual Leadership, Safety Specific Transformational Leadership and Charismatic Leadership are being practiced in construction.

Keywords:

Construction project, leadership styles,
project safety

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1. Introduction

Study by Yousif *et al.*, [1] found out that the construction industry has agonized from leadership crisis in current years although there is growth of construction companies. This crisis in leadership decelerated the growth of the industry as leaders possessed inadequate essential style to lead and accomplish the preferred goals. Construction industry has a poor reputation of a high accident rate and hazardous activities on site. This reflects by the statistics of high accident rates in recent years in many countries. This problem causes loss of many lives, health, skilled personnel, compensation,

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and disrupting the production. It is a consequence of the failure of safety management on construction site. Recognised by Inbaekemen GO and Odivwri JE [2] in their study that leadership impacts significantly on employee performance and participative leadership styles help to improve performance among employee. In addition study by Dahal *et al.*, [3] found that different styles of leadership are needed in different situation. Study by Pretorius *et al.* [4] found that there are four stages of generic project life cycle i.e. Starting the Project, Organizing and preparing, carrying out the project work and closing the project. Therefore, shall be perfectly suitable for a project manager to use different project leadership styles at different stages of the project lifecycle. According to Safety and Health the official magazine of the National Safety Council of United State of America [5], updated figures by International Labour Organization (ILO) on the global incidence of work-related accidents and fatal illnesses is 2.78 million deaths a year attributable to work in 2017, compared to 2.33 million in 2014. Added further by International Labour Organization (ILO) 2018 world statistics [6] that the total cost of illnesses, injuries and deaths was 3.94 percent of the world Gross Domestic Product (GDP), or \$2.99 trillion with at least 60,000 fatal accidents on construction sites around the world. Study by Shengli Niu [7] added that there is one fatal accident occurs every ten minutes in the construction sector. Estimated about 4% of the world Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is lost due to accident and work-related diseases. According to Tabish and Jha [8], construction is mostly a one-off activity and situations encountered in construction projects are also unique. Currently construction is practiced under the framework of a multi-layered subcontracting system, with workers of different skill sets and from different age groups. The work is also characterized by its casual nature, temporary relationships between employer and employee, uncertain working hours, lack of basic amenities, and inadequacy of welfare facilities. In addition, Tabish and Jha [8] recognized that the manager's safety leadership influences the success of behavioural processes. Safety in construction must be given priority during preconstruction, construction, and post-construction phase. What's more, according to Mullen and Kelloway [9] researchers have lately distinguished safety leadership as a key contributing component to the commonness of accident and injuries in the working environment, impression of safety climate were unfavourably influenced when leaders did not effectively promote safe work conduct and practices.

In addition, from the study by Du and Sun [10] found that just a single approach to lessening human error or accidents is effective safety leadership and added by Chunli Wu *et al.*, [11] leadership is the key factor impacting construction safety. Contemplated by Sulastre *et al.* [12] leaders delivered on vision and values through interaction and communication and effective communication prompts to usually comprehended objectives and intend to accomplish them at all level. According to the study by Julian Barling *et al.*, [13], organization in which leaders take an active role in promoting occupational safety enjoy better safety records and supportive supervision in general is associated with safety at work. General leadership is apparent in the accompanying definition that, leadership is 'The art of impacting individuals by influence or case to take after a line of activity' therefore, an initiative teach that envelops safety through elements of impact, for example, engagement, possession, and connections are required. These components are intensely perceived through the initiative orders of third generational leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, charismatic leadership. Added by Udhayakumar and P. Karthikeyan [14] leader leads the team in effective and efficient way to achieve the project goals and organizations goals continuously. Study by Liridon Veliu *et al.*, [15] recognized that leadership is not "one size fits all" concept, and styles vary significantly among the successful leaders. The most successful leaders have integrity, they inspire people with a shared vision of the future, they set clear goals and motivate people towards them, they manage delivery, and they communicate well

with their teams. Added further by Liridon Veliu *et al.*, [15], without the leadership the implementation of tasks and their achievements are impossible.

2. Leadership Styles

Study by Ayodeji Emmanuel Oke [16] on Nigerian construction industry in 2012 with the aims to assess project managers' leadership styles practiced in construction project, recognized that construction industry is a project-based in nature with its temporary multi-organizations will almost certainly have an important influence on the managerial leadership styles of professionals working in the industry. Appropriate leadership style for different kinds of project should be adopted. Added further by Liridon Veliu *at el.*, [15] leadership style in an organization is one of the factors that play significant role in enhancing or retarding the interest and commitment of the individuals in the organization. These styles affect everyone from senior management to newest intern; they create corporate culture that influences the organization and performance. Different leadership styles may affect organizational effectiveness or performance. The success of any organization relies on the leadership styles practiced by leaders.

Study by Junwei Zheng *et al.*, [17] in China on effects of different types of leadership on innovation performance in a construction project-based organization identified that with the rapid development of the construction technology, the construction industry has become more knowledge-intensive, thus it became imperative to carry on innovation by the sustainability trends. Leadership is essential for enacting and implementing innovative organizational strategy and structure, promoting organizational learning, and motivating team visions towards innovation. The project' success partially depends on the manager's leadership style. Leadership style is a combination of characteristics, skills and behaviour that the managers use to interact with employees. Through an appropriate leadership styles, project-based organization can increase their coordination and knowledge sharing with the management of social capital, thus producing and improving the high levels of innovation performance.

Table 1
 Leadership Styles in Construction

Author	Style
Chulin Wu <i>et al.</i> , [11], Julian Barling <i>et al.</i> , [13], Dominic Cooper [18], Muhamad Rosdi <i>et al.</i> , [19]	Transformational Leadership
Chulin Wu <i>et al.</i> , [11], Muhamad Rosdi <i>et al.</i> [19]	Transactional Leadership
Chulin Wu <i>et al.</i> [11]	Full Range Leadership (FRL)
Dominic Cooper [18]	Servant Leadership
Niels-Peter van Doorn [20], Mark. J. Moir [21]	Contextual Leadership
Stacey M. Conchie and Donald [22]	Safety Specific Transformational Leadership
Ng Rui Wei and Mas Bambang Baroto [23], Ylva Sandberg and Moreman [25]	Charismatic Leadership

Based on the literature reviews performed listed in Table 1, seven identified leadership styles prominently are practiced in construction industry. Study by Lirido Veliu *et al.*, [15] on the influence of leadership styles on employee's performance in Kosovo recognised that Leadership style is viewed as the combination of trait, characteristics, skills and behaviours that leaders use when interacting with their subordinates. Adapting appropriate leadership style during the stages of project life cycles is essential in order to ensure project variables are achieved and fulfilled. Supported by Muredeni Liphadzi *at el.*, [26] in their study that it is important to note that good leadership assist in the successful execution of projects. Added further by Lirido Veliu *et al.*, [15],

different leadership styles bring about different consequences, which have direct or indirect impact on the attitude and behaviours of the employees. Leaders must adjust their leadership styles to the situation as well as to the people being led.

3. Results and Discussion

From the table 2 below, we recognized and conclude that leadership styles need to move parallels with the project stages in project life cycle in order to sustain effectiveness and efficiency of project performance. For construction industry and project particularly, it is inappropriate for project leaders that practiced single leadership style in managing their projects. Consideration on environmental domain, organizational domain and intra-interpersonal domain and three contextual factors such as time, location and culture is essential for project leaders in adapting leadership style to be practiced within project life cycle. According to study by Abednego Oswald Gwaya *et al.*, [27] on the role of servant leadership in project management in Kenya, integrating leadership concepts allows project managers to apply logic and analytical skills to project activities and tactics. Identified in study by S. Pretorius *et al.*, [4] that project manager needs to use different leadership styles at different stages of the project lifecycle and further added by Ayodeji Emmanuel Oke [16] that the style of leadership changes as the project progresses through its life cycle. Contemplated by Abednego Oswald Gwaya *et al.*, [27] in their study that there is interesting correlation between the belief that servant leader behaviors applied to successful project managers and factors to project success. According to Thurairajah N. Amaratunga *et al.*, [28] in their study on leadership in construction partnering project, combination of transformational and transactional are needed in construction partnering project, firelighter leadership style to support the cultural adoption and change. In addition, study by Hongxia Li *et al.*, [29] on the impact of management level's charismatic leadership style on miners' unsafe behavior conclude that charismatic leadership has a significantly negative impact on unsafe behavior of miners. Added by Professor Krume Nikoloski [24] in his study charismatic leadership and power: using the power of charisma for better leadership in the enterprises concludes that charismatic leadership is such an important driving factor to business prosperity. Finding in study by Michelle Inness *et al.*, [30] on transformational leadership and employee safety performance: A within-person, between-Job design identified that transformational leadership does not need to have a safety-specific focus to motivate safety participation in employees. According to Kasapoglu E. in his study on industry leadership: leading within the field of construction and design [31] identified that the suitable leadership behavior for the statement due to the environment and circumstances is a key to motivate employees for achieving productivity. We conclude that it is important for construction project leaders to determine and adapt the most appropriate leadership styles to be practiced and applied parallel with the project lifecycle stages to sustain effectiveness project management and achieve designed project objectives.

Table 2
 Leadership Styles, Dimensions and Advantages

Leadership Style	Dimension	Advantage
Transformational	Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Individualized consideration, Intellectual stimulation	Help to develop and maintain a sense of commitment and raises aspiration and motivation among colleagues and followers. Modify and transform company culture with visualization, description and directive [11,13, 16,18,19].
Transactional	Contingent reward, Management by exception	Help to implant changes into organization culture, guaranteeing consistence with safety compliances of safety legislations, standards and regulations by reward and punishing. Minimized system pitfalls and enforced corrective actions [11,19].
Full Range Leadership (FRL)	Containing Transformational, Leadership and Transactional, Leadership	Can be regarded as the foundation of safety leadership factor structure [11]. (similar to two styles above)
Servant	Setting individuals up for accomplishment by encouraging their needs	Makes a strong domain to build worker engagement that emphatically influences group execution, Effectively going to and being included in safety committees, safety meeting, toolbox talks and common safety agenda; Reliably looking for and encouraging individuals' thoughts/activities to enhance safety; Resourcing and following up on any corrective and preventive activities to guarantee accomplishment [18].
Contextual	Context as a mediator of leader effectiveness	Help to influence one another within relationship – relationships that are process oriented and socially constructed; Focus on three domains can be described as environmental domain, organizational domain and intra-interpersonal domain; Three Contextual factors time, location and culture within a company [20,21].
Safety Specific Transformational Leadership	Safety Motivation, Inspiring, Safety Policy, Safety Concern, Safety Monitoring, Safety Learning, Safety Coaching, Safety Caring, Safety Controlling, etc	Direct impact on safety related events And occupational injuries; create benefits for subordinates; automatically generates trust; safety positive role models and effective communicator [22].
Charismatic Leadership	Intelligent, Persuasive, Magnetic, Innovative,	Invite their followers to become part of the group; ethical orientation; reduce interpersonal and work place deviance; influence in empowering ways; changing followers, core attitude, beliefs and values [23,25]

4. Conclusion

From the review done, we conclude our findings. Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Full Range Leadership, Servant Leadership, Contextual Leadership, Safety Specific Transformational Leadership and Charismatic Leadership are leadership styles practiced in construction project. Different leadership styles generating different consequences on construction project performance and achievement. Project manager needs to use different leadership styles at different stages of project life cycle. Leadership is not “One size fits all” concept. The success of any project-based organization relies on the leadership styles practiced by the leaders. The project success partially depends on the manager’s leadership style. Leadership style is view as the

combination of trait, characteristics, skill and behaviors. Leadership is key factor impacting construction safety. Safety leadership is key contributing component to commonness of accident and injuries in construction project. There is only one approach to reduce human errors and injuries in construction project are by adopting effective safety leadership. Further study focus on the influence of Safety Specific Transformational Leadership style's trait, characteristics, skill and behaviors on reducing the accident and injuries in construction project is recommended.

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